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SPANISH RENAISSANCE.

No fairer spot on the inhabitable globe could greet the eye of an army, than was offered by the Plains of Granada, when the Spanish troops of Ferdinand and Isabella wound their way through the narrow passes of the Sierra Nevada mountains, and came down by the banks of the Guadalquivir river. Before them was the city of Granada, built upon two lofty hills separated by the sluggish Darro, and capped on one side by the Alcazar, a fort of singular strength, and upon the other by the royal palace of the Alhambra, a palace capable of containing 40,000 men, having its harem, its courts, its suites of rooms, its fountains, its luxurious baths and stately halls, in fact so magnificent was it for even those magnificent times, that the Moors believed alchemy had been the instrument of its construction. The plain about the city extended for over one hundred miles in circumference, was in the highest state of cultivation, orchards and vineyards thrived upon the sides of the protecting mountains, and fields of waving grain or gardens of citron, figs and mulberries dotted the level. The air was balmy and inviting, and the odor of grapes and flowers was borne into the city itself. The Moors were reasonable in their belief that the Paradise of the Prophet was located directly over this fertile spot.

Into this fair country came the Spanish forces to exact tribute from the Moorish king, who had with rare temerity responded to Ferdinand's demand for tribute, with the daring words: "Tell your sovereign that the Kings of Granada who used to pay tribute in money to the Castilian Crown are dead. Our mint at present coins nothing but blades of scimitars and heads of lances."

Boabdil, the son of this stewart king, bore the shock of the Spanish war, and fought desperately for his throne, but the savagery of the Castilian was stronger than the arms of the Moors, and Boabdil fled from his capital, the exile ruler of Granada.

Upon their return from the war, the Spaniards were filled with the luxury they had seen and brought with them the tastes they had acquired, the spoil from Granada's cities whetted the thirst for other splendor, and thus began the most brilliant era of Spanish art, and the people were encouraged by examples of elegance to cultivate, and indulge in more artistic displays, to elaborate their homes and give free vent to their natural love of elaboration and embellishment.

Their architecture was borne down with suggestions, panels succeeded panels, and columns, each handsomer than its companion bore up the elaborate roof, everything was made to conform with its neighbor, and whilst partaking much of the lightness and beauty of the French it was more substantial, more consistent, more symmetrical in design, there was ever a motive present for each action, and a medallion seemed to have some higher purpose than to serve as a mere ornament. Nor was it singular that such elegance should be favored, for no Court excelled that of Madrid in the regal qualities of its accompaniments, and the royal style of its entertainments. To the jeweled guests that crowded the halls and drawing-rooms of the king these elaborate surroundings were but fitting frames, and each suited admirably the requirements of the other.

There is hardly any period in history that offers the opportunities for the selection of rich examples equal to this, and we have taken advantage of it to give a series of "Studies" in Spanish Renaissance, as applied to modern uses, which will extend over the principal apartments of the house, showing their character of ornamentation, the eccentricities of their style, the beautiful detail of their work, and the thoroughness of their execution.

We have selected the dining-room as the subject for our first study, and the manner in which the artist has treated it is no exaggeration upon the original style.

The woodwork should be mahogany, and,

as may be seen, requires considerable carving: ebonized wood, of course, is also suited, but if one wishes to be in accord more strictly with the custom of the true Spanish style, mahogany is the proper wood to employ. The carving need not, by any means, be made expensive, and it must not be thought because the plan itself is elaborate in appearance, that the cost of production is necessarily extreme, for it may be gotten up in an imitation of some rich wood, and that imitation may extend through all the materials required, and bring the expense into the possibilities of a moderate expenditure. The details of the carving may be sufficiently defined in the plate to enable the designer to follow its principles to some extent in his own, and it would be well to observe the same character, so far as practicable.

The walls are covered with leather of a rich yellow hue, ornamented in squares with a raised or embossed centre piece upon each. The dado should be of brilliantly blue tiles, so arranged with others of a somewhat different pattern about the edges as to form a border, which adds very much to the complete appearance of the large panel-like spaces. The mantel and chimney piece is very suggestive, the manner of building the clock into the shelf itself is uncommon in this country, and will undoubtedly be appreciated and utilized by some one. The curtain hiding the grate is another most desirable feature, and arranged as here shown, could be applied to some of our own city houses during the Summer, with

to the effect to place a bar from the side wall to the pillar at the steps, having flung over it a portiere of some showy material.

The ceiling is entirely of stucco, wood not being used in Spanish work of this kind. The stucco may, of course, be treated as simply or as ornately as the means and disposition of the owner will suggest. With the Spaniards the highly elaborated character prevailed, and their ceilings were picked out in gold and silver, with the panel paintings on canvas.

The chairs and table shown at the lower part of the plate are in strict conformity with the style of the room itself, and made in proportion to the other details.

Next month this series of studies will be continued by giving a parlor in the same Spanish Renaissance style, and the opportunity given for fine display in such a room has been judiciously taken advantage of by the artist.

THE PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN FOR CARPETS AND HANGINGS.

BY GILBERT R. REDGRAVE.

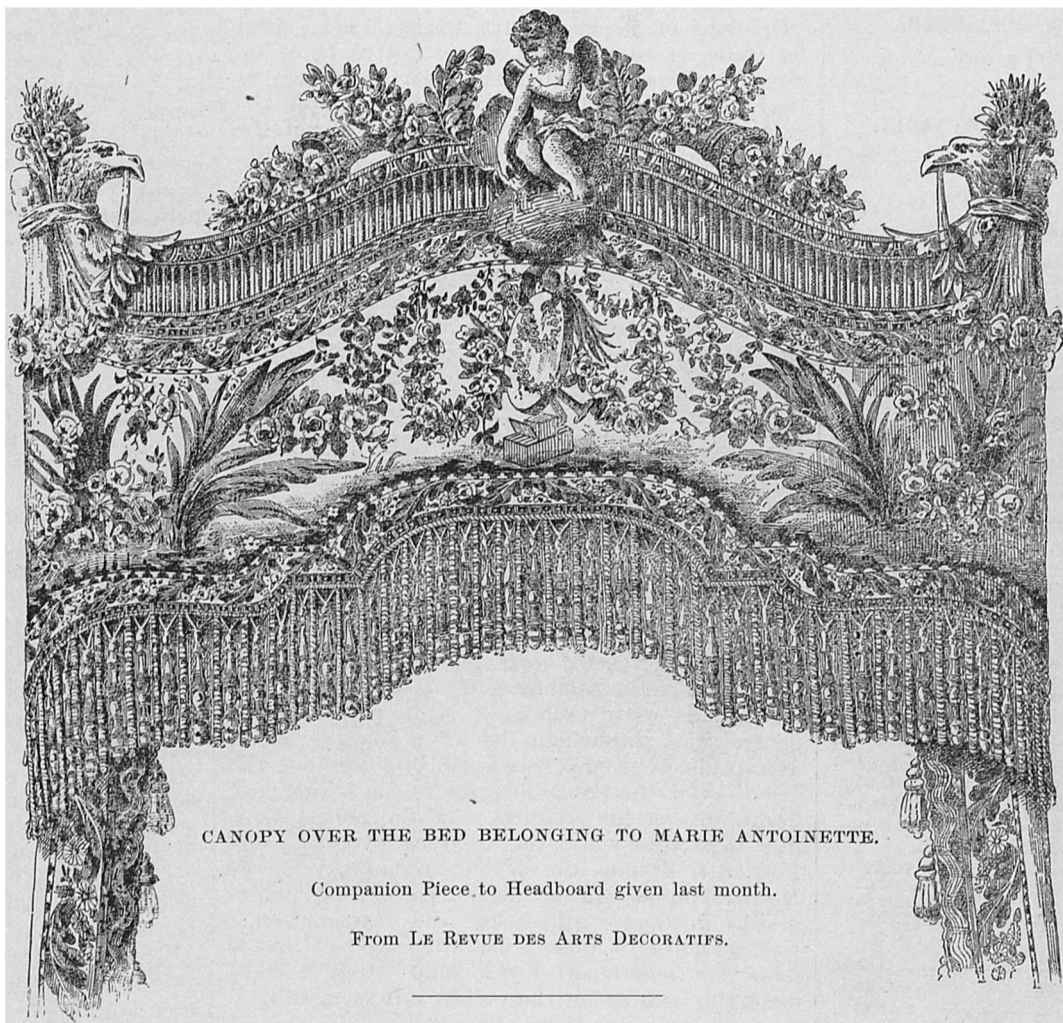
BETWEEN thirty and forty years ago a band of ardent reformers of the popular taste conceived the notion of collecting together—and publicly exhibiting—various articles of furniture, textile fab-

rics, and drinking vessels, which, judged by certain standards they had set up, and designated as "true principles," were found wanting, either as being bad in design, or false in principle. This collection formed the contents of what was styled "The Chamber of Horrors," and, as would naturally be expected, it attracted a considerable amount of attention. Manufacturers, who had with very considerable trouble and expense, brought out some striking novelty, found very shortly afterwards that their treasured production was occupying a prominent place in this ill-omened chamber, and loud complaints arose on all sides against this arrogant attempt to sit in judgment upon the public taste. Of course, the chamber was speedily closed, and manufacturers were left to their own devices, but not until the fact had been to some extent recognized that there were certain principles which it was possible to violate, and certain canons of good taste which might be applied even to such simple matters as the form of a teacup or the pattern of a carpet.

Nowadays, when everyone is somewhat of an artist, and when taste in all these

matters and a correct appreciation of the art of designing has made such giant strides among us, we can scarcely believe that there is any necessity for a pillory for bad art; but it is surprising, when we come to consider carefully the objects with which we are surrounded in our homes, or which we encounter in our daily walks, and apply to them the principles which have been formulated for our guidance, how sadly they are found to sin in matters of good taste.

In briefly discussing the designing of carpets and curtains, we have no wish to bring together a string of truisms with respect to the general principles which should guide the designer, neither can we hope, within the narrow limits of the space at our disposal, to indicate more than the veriest outline of the laws against which it is dangerous to offend, in the choice of our hangings and floral coverings. It is fortunate for us that the advance in the popular taste, to which we have just referred, has led to a more marked improvement in rugs and carpets than perhaps in any other department of our manufactures, and we shall not have to complain of any glaring offence against good taste. At the first great Exhibition in London in 1851, when speaking of the carpets and rugs, the reporter on "Design" was forced to complain of the frequent attempts at pictorial display on the part of the hearthrug makers, who aimed at giving us a truthful and realistic representation of



CANOPY OVER THE BED BELONGING TO MARIE ANTOINETTE.

Companion Piece to Headboard given last month.

FROM LE REVUE DES ARTS DECORATIFS.

considerable profit in an artistic sense. The short, heavy pillars supporting the mantel at either end, are worthy of careful study, and with the winged animals above are fine examples of the Spanish style; the bric-a-brac shelf near the ceiling line may be made very attractive, if adorned with suitable ornaments, and finishes off the entire mantel most acceptably. The small panel paintings are upon canvas, as is the custom largely in Europe; the diamond shaped panels in the various columns bear grotesque heads symbolic of the Renaissance, and portraying the love of the fabulous in the minds of the people. The hangings at the windows should be heavy tapestry, brilliantly colored, and having across the top a short, richly adorned curtain, set in between the frame of the opening. As the prevailing disposition is to have ornaments, bric-a-brac and the like in unusual and odd shapes, it will be noticed that the hanging cabinets and shelves have been made to conform to this idea and the general style of the room. The end of the apartment, as shown in the sectional view at the lower right hand corner of the plate, is shaped like a bay-window, and approached by three steps, bringing one upon a platform looking out into a conservatory beyond. This bay-window is supported by a richly embellished column and a short balustrade. Similar hangings to those used elsewhere in the room may be had here, and, as will be seen, it adds much

a lion or a leopard, correct not only in color and surroundings, but the size of life; destined to repose, moreover, in the very place of all others where most of us would least like to encounter wild beasts, in front, namely, of the domestic hearth.

The bare admission of the need of applying certain principles to the designs for textile fabrics was a great step in advance, and the attention which has been directed to the rugs of Persia and India has exercised a marked influence for good on the colors and forms of modern carpet designs. The great principles which underlie all successful and really suitable carpet designs are utility and fitness for their intended purpose. The laws on which all carpet decoration must be based are those which govern the style of ornament suitable for flat surfaces. The carpet is, first of all, in the nature of it, a warm, flat covering for the floor; secondly, it is the field or groundwork on which we are to place our more or less decorative furniture.

Having established these two points, we may proceed to consider the treatment of the carpet as a flat covering for the floor on which we have to walk. It at once becomes obvious that all attempts to give the effect of objects in relief would be wrong. We have long since outlived the time when the floors were daily strewn with fresh rushes and sweet herbs. To depict on the carpet, therefore, a profusion of natural flowers, however true to nature, and however realistic may be the representation, is false in principle. All mere imitations of flowers and foliage, of fruits and shells, and other solid substances are improper, and the more so the more literal is the representation. We do not wish that our carpet should impose even the suggested necessity of picking one's way over a litter of natural objects, however beautiful in form and color, and we must therefore avoid such ornament as may render any such caution necessary. Moreover, as the carpet has to serve as a groundwork for the display of furniture and other objects, it is important that the pattern should be subdued and subordinated to this purpose. All large strongly-marked geometrical figures are out of place, and violent contrasts both of form and color cannot be too strongly deprecated. Nothing exerts greater influence upon the apparent size of an apartment than the pattern of the carpet, and we have frequently seen well furnished rooms entirely spoiled in their effect by an injudicious choice of carpet, the pattern of which dissected the floor into a series of overgrown patches resembling nothing so much as a badly colored map of the United States. As a general rule, we are inclined to think that any recurrence of geometrical patterns enclosing compartments of large size is fatal to the success of a carpet design. Another important matter to be remembered is that an "up and down" treatment of a carpet pattern is only permissible in rare instances, as in long galleries or narrow passages.

The pattern must either be dispersed (i.e. evenly distributed over the whole area, without reference to top or bottom), or it must be arranged with reference to a centre to which it should work. A theoretically perfect carpet pattern should consist of a border, which should be rather brighter in color than the central field, and be proportionate in width to the size or scale of the repeat, and secondly, of a field or centre of some simple diaper pattern or ornament in subdued colors. The use of primary colors and bright tints in carpets must be avoided. There is, in fact, a definite scale of coloring suitable for rugs and coverings. Perhaps the best combinations are those in which, on a field or ground of some secondary shade, the pattern consists of small repeats touched with primary colors in various tints, relieved or edged with gray, the latter being the nearest approach to white which we think advisable for carpets. Now, bearing in mind, this suggestion, examine carefully the first genuine Persian mat you find, and you will admit that the tone of the coloring accords well with the scale here given. The carpets of Turkey and of the East rarely offend the eye, and err, if at all, in the direction of sombreness and gloom, but yet on these carpets, in the countries for which they were produced, are displayed in lavish abundance the gorgeous costumes and the brilliant decorations

for which India and Persia are famous—and it would be difficult to imagine a more fitting foil for this splendor and magnificence than such carpets present to us. In the carpets of Turkey, which abound in negative shades of green, red, and blue, the edges of the pattern are generally outlined in black; the decoration, which consists mainly of highly conventionalized flowers, is, if anything, somewhat too large in scale, but the harmony of the coloring is undeniable. From such carpets as these, manufacturers may learn many useful lessons.

While treating of this branch of the subject, we ought not to leave unnoticed the prevailing fashion of covering only the central portion of the room with a bordered carpet, the margin showing a band of parquet, or covered merely with a neutral felt. This plan has much to recommend it. The carpet necessarily requires to be frequently taken up for the removal of the dust from beneath it, and this new plan gives much greater facilities for this than the methods usually adopted, whereby it is nailed tightly down all round to the line of the skirting, being made the full size of the apartment. Carpets for this new use require a slightly different treatment at the hands of the designer, and many materials of a lighter character might be used for this purpose, if secured with pins to an undercarpet of plain felt.

We have devoted so much of our space to carpets that we must speak very briefly of curtains, the other branch of the subject. It is generally admitted that the color of the carpet must control the color of the hangings and of the wall paper,

graceful and delicate ornament. Small sprigs, evenly disposed over the surface, or flowers flatly treated, without shading, and simple geometrical forms look well in and are suitable for white curtains. If disposed to fault-finding, we could discover less, perhaps, to complain of in modern lace curtains, and indeed in curtain designs generally, than in any other description of textile fabrics. Respecting the best methods of displaying and arranging curtains, and on the treatment of the window opening generally, as seen from the interior of the apartment, we hope to say something on a future occasion.

ON FURNISHING BEAUTIFULLY.

BY MRS. M. E. HAWES.

OBSERVE, mere oddity is not originality. But a quaint touch well placed—be it dragon, pug, cabbage, what not, anything that seems unbeautiful but gives pleasure by a small passing shock, is as charming as a witty speech.

In decoration as in other things, THE VALUE OF GENTLE TRANSITIONS, with an abrupt one only now and then, is not enough studied. A room draped in tender gray-green (very dainty, but very dull in large masses), might be made excessively striking by the green being shaded into various tones, and a single point or two of brilliant red or yellow introduced somewhere.

But the same room bespattered overmuch with red and yellow, would not strike the imagination at all. The one might be like a bank of flowers; the other would probably be a mere vulgar medley.

AND THE VALUE OF ABRUPT TRANSITIONS is also real enough. A room be-feathered and be-plushed in pale, soft tones, like a very nest of feathers, might be the headquarters of comfort, or it might not. Some harder and more definite touch would be wanted to take away a cloudy and characterless impression. It is possible to actually need the abrupt touch which overdone would give us a feeling of restless discomfort. Here the sharp angles of the bare wood in some chest or press, would be invaluable to relieve the eye, though in certain other rooms they might distress it.

BEAUTY IS RELATIVE. How impossible it must ever be to say, This thing or that thing is absolutely good, when everybody must feel that the goodness depends on a thousand consistencies and proprieties.

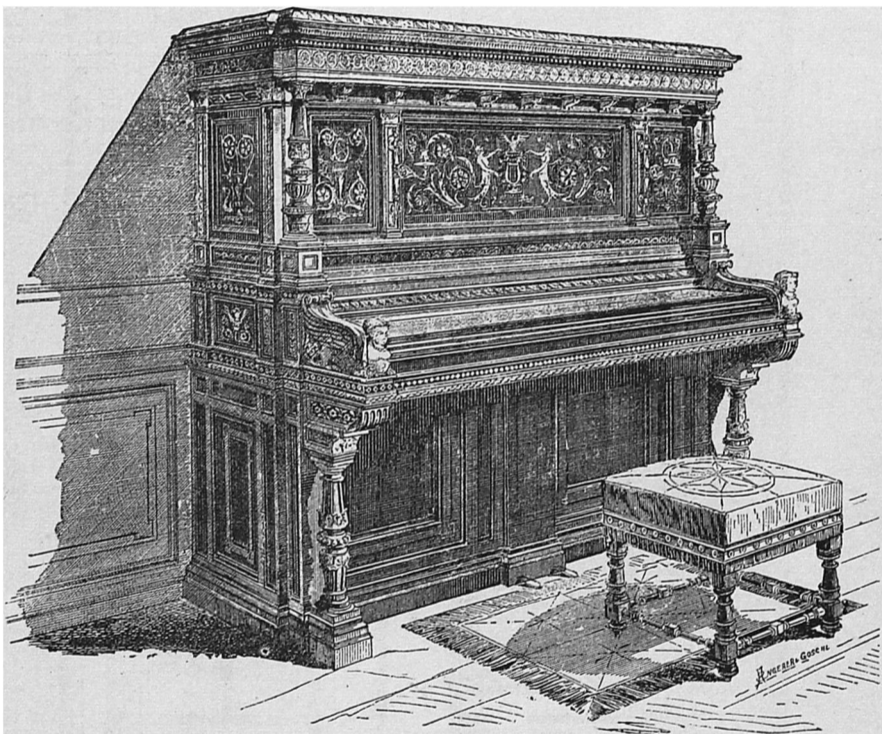
Beauty means fitness, because beauty is always spontaneous, and springs from a basis of utility. BEAUTY IS NEVER UNMEANING; can always give a reason for its being. Here come in the considerations of what is good for you, what for me; the rights of persons, and ranks, and seasons. What is beautiful in the wealthy palace is often not beautiful in the farmhouse. Why? Because it

is inconsistent, out of character; it has no *raison d'être* there. The gold console table would be ridiculous in the dairy, though the dairy-keeper might be able to afford the thing. The heavy wooden dresser, with its stern northern carving, such as we find in old Scotch kitchens, would not be beautiful, picturesque as it really is, in the drawing-room beside the dainty marqueterie, which is in keeping there. Why? Because a dresser is not wanted in the place.

The solid wood, useful to chop upon, the heavy shelves, strong to support old pewter and earthen pans and dishes, look absurd upholding Sèvres vases and gilt candelabra. One sees at once there is no *raison d'être* for this weight and solidity, and the rude, strong ornamentation seems too rude, but makes the daintier objects seem too fragile when the two classes are unskillfully brought together.

This is, of course, only another proof that real beauty is inseparable from character. The room that mirrors your tastes must really fit your habits and pursuits. Without this no habitation can be interesting; therefore, without this there can be no real beauty.

FASHION ALWAYS SPRINGS FROM A BASIS OF GOOD SENSE, whatever its vagaries may be. The basis of good sense is Dress, and in Room Decoration, which is only a kind of detached Dress, is the "Becoming" (the fit, the indispensable.) In Dress the old primal instinct to emphasize



A Subscriber noting a "Why Not" published in our October number, writes saying that in Germany, at least, much attention is given to the ornamentation of Piano Cases, and sends the above example of German work. It is certainly much more desirable, in some respects, than our own ordinary cases, and may furnish some suggestions.

and the rules which apply to the decoration of the curtains are practically the same as those which govern and limit the treatment of flat upright surfaces. Much greater richness both of form and color than in carpets is allowable in the case of curtains, though in most apartments a subdued rather than a pronounced tone of coloring will produce the best effect. The character of the pattern will depend greatly upon the texture of the material; thus in velvet or cloth hangings a much larger and heavier pattern may be adopted than in rep or chintz. Great attention is being directed at the present time to the preparation of curtain stuff in mixed fabrics of jute, wool, and silk, and in many cases, where several fibres are employed, very rich effects may be obtained by a simple and natural treatment of the different materials in plain surfaces so juxtaposed as to produce patterns. Thus the dull sheen of the jute serves as an excellent contrast to the lustre and gloss of the silk. A more natural treatment of foliage and flowers can be attempted by the curtain designer than is permissible in the heavier fabrics for carpets. Here, too, an up and down pattern is rightly employed, and the use of borders give richness and value to the material. Each class of stuff needs its own special ornament. It is manifest that a pattern which would be admirable for a velvet would be wholly unsuitable for a chintz. Lace curtains, again, require, in consequence of their light and transparency, a